(a) whether an agreement has lately been reached between Indian and Pakistani authorities to reduce the armed forces in Siachen;

(b) if so, the details of the agreement; and

(c) the steps since taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Special Recruitment Scheme for people of border areas of J&K

200. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has started any special recruitment scheme for the eligible people from the border areas of Jammu and Kashmir near Indo-Pak border in the defence forces;

(b) whether the scheme has since been finalized; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Recruitment is carried out for all districts of Jammu & Kashmir, including border areas, as per recruitment policy in the defence forces. The response from these areas has been adequate. In addition, during the year 2003-2004, 7 Infantry Battalions of Territorial Army (TA) comprising 6 Infantry Battalions of TA on 'Home and hearth concept' and one Infantry Battalion of TA of surrendered militants (Ikhwanis) were sanctioned with a total strength of approximately 7332. Recruitment of about 6262 persons has been made from the State of Jammu & Kashmir for these units.

MIG-21 Crashes

201. DR. AKHILESH DAS:
DR. PRABHA THAKUR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether another MIG-21 jet crashed on January 4, 2005; if so, where and in what circumstances;